

What University Governance Can Taiwan Learn from the United States?

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Abstract

Due to changes from centralization to marketization, Taiwan's university governance must increase its effectiveness. The purpose of this paper was to introduce trends in and issues of Taiwan's university governance, describe university governance in the United States, and draw implications that Taiwan's university governance needs to learn from the United States. Literature review was employed to reach the purposes. It is found that Taiwan's university governance is struggling in heading for the balance of democracy and efficiency although most colleges and universities in Taiwan adopt the model of bicameral governance which is very prevalent in the United States. In order to solve this issue, Taiwan's university governance system needs to learn the following structure of bicameral governance which is popular in the United States and stated by Eileen Hogan: (1) a governing board which is responsible for the administrative and financial elements of the university, and (2) an academic senate or a university council with responsibility for academic matters of an educational/academic nature. In order to do so, Taiwan's university governance needs more communications and a legislative change.

Keywords: university governance, higher education, globalization, Taiwan

University governance refers to the structure and process of authoritative decision making across issues that are significant for external and internal stakeholders of a university (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). Put simply, university governance is the way how universities are operated.

Since the end of the last century, the number of colleges and universities has rapidly grown. Trends accompanying with this growth include the deregulation of education policy, underfunding, and tendency to university

corporatization. That is to say, Taiwan's university governance is changing from centralization to marketization in an era of the rise of neoliberalism.

Governing colleges and universities has always been a vital part of the academic enterprise in the United States (Ricci, 1999). The purpose of this paper is to brief trends in and issues of Taiwan's university governance, describe university governance in the United States, and draw implications to Taiwan's university governance from the United States.

Trends in and Issues of Taiwan's University Governance

Fielden (2008) indicated that in recent years the reforms in global higher education governance are driven by the same external and internal pressures, following the same patterns, and they tend to have the following nine elements :

1. Legislation that establishes universities as autonomous independent entities,
2. Withdrawal of the state from certain detailed control and management functions and the devolution of responsibility to universities themselves,
3. The creation of buffer bodies or agencies to carry out some of the detailed financial control and supervision functions in the sector or to provide sector wide services,
4. Adoption of funding models that give institutions greater freedoms and that encourage them to develop new sources of income,
5. Creation of external agencies that monitor the quality of all courses delivered by institutions,
6. The development of new forms of accountability through reporting on performance and outcomes in achieving nationally set goals for the sector, as well as institutionally set targets,
7. Confirmation of the role of a university board as having overall responsibility to the minister or the buffer body,
8. Gradual withdrawal of the state from decisions on the appointment of the chair of the board or president and members of the board,
9. Expectations of managerial competence by the board and the president ,
(p. 43).

The reforms of Taiwan's university governance also tend to include the elements above, indeed. After the 1994 University Act took effect, colleges and

universities in Taiwan have enjoyed more autonomy and flexibility in operations than before. However, the Act and its amended versions are still criticized for its excessive regulation of university administration. The most critical issue is the fact that University Council has been substantially empowered as the highest decision-making body. Based upon the idea that faculty members should be in charge of university governance, University Council, including administrators, faculty, staff and students as representatives, has been substantially stipulated as the highest decision-making body. This leads to the following problems at least: (1) the controversy over the authority of a variety of decision-making processes for colleges and universities (Chiang, 2006); (2) the complaint of “having many responsibilities but little power” from university administrators and president; and (3) the complaint of “spending too much time in meetings to work out affairs other than teaching and research” from university faculty. Thus, Taiwan’s university governance is struggling in heading for the balance of democracy and efficiency.

University Governance in the United States

Colleges and universities in the United States have a history of leading among all segments of the society in research and discovery of new knowledge. Harvard College (Harvard University, 2010, May 8), founded in 1650, today still adheres to the purposes for which the charter of 1650 was granted: “Harvard strives to create knowledge, to open the minds of students to that knowledge...” The success in creating new knowledge at Harvard and other colleges and universities in the past centuries is, in no small part, the result of and a tribute to the fundamental concept and tradition of university governance that values academic freedom and shared responsibility by faculty, administration, and governing board.

As time has changed, and new knowledge has been discovered, the time-tested governance concept has remained relatively intact, although university governing boards are always entailing the various issues of maintaining and striking the proper balance between autonomy and decentralization.

Colleges and Universities in the United States

Colleges and universities in this report refer to the baccalaureate degree

granting institutions and above. Since education is primarily a state and local responsibility in the U.S., there are no national universities other than the U.S. armed forces academies such as the United States Military Academy at Westpoint, NY. Thus, colleges and universities can be classified as public and private institutions. There are a few city-supported colleges among the public institutions. Most of the public ones are state-supported institutions. Among the private, there are independent, nonsectarian, and religiously affiliated colleges and universities.

Colleges and universities are also classified by Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2010, May 8) according to their academic degrees and teaching and research mission as follows: (1) doctoral-granting universities, (2) master's colleges and universities, (3) baccalaureate colleges, and (4) special focus institutions.

Governance at Public Universities

Although there is a U.S. Department of Education, but unlike most countries, the federal Department of Education does not establish public schools, community colleges, and colleges and universities. It is the states and communities that establish schools, develop standards, and determine enrollment and graduation requirements. The Department of Education has its official mission to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness. Thus, the governance of public colleges and universities rests solely on each state or community through its governing board.

Public colleges and universities in the United States have become larger, more complex, and enroll more students than private institutions. Some states operate on a single state-wide governing board, and some have two or more boards, such as California which has a governing board for the University of California (UC-Berkeley, UCLA, etc), and one for the California State University (San Francisco State University, CSU-Fresno, etc). Texas has three governing boards: University of Texas, Texas A&M University, and Texas State University. Numerous states have established under the state government a coordinating board or commission on higher education that serves as the state-wide agency coordinating the operation of all state colleges and universities with each institution having its own board of trustees.

State constitution generally provides authorization for the creation of the governing board and entrusts the board as the policy-making body for the general administration, control, management, and governance of all affairs of the constituent institutions. The number and election of board members and the terms of service vary from state to state. A major responsibility of the governing board is the election and appointment of the president. Each constituent institution also has a board of trustees, and its composition is set by state statute. Each institution also sets its own mission and purposes, emphases in teaching and research, and content and delivery of its academic programs.

Governance at Private Colleges and Universities

Governing boards of independent, private colleges and universities are acting for the institutional founders to fulfill the mission while, at the same time, ensuring the best interest of the general public. Like the public boards, the private boards have major responsibility of electing and supporting the presidents. In addition, the governing boards set and clarify mission and purposes, ensure good management, and participate in fund-raising. For example, Harvard University (2010) has two governing boards. Harvard Corporation--formally known as the President and Fellows of Harvard College—is the university's executive board. The seven-member board is responsible for the day-to-day management of the university's finances and business affairs. The Board of Overseers, consisting of 30 members, approves important actions of the Harvard Corporation.

Shared Governance

A modern university is a complex organization carrying out teaching and research activities at the university's undergraduate and graduate levels. To support its fundamental mission of teaching and research, a university must adhere to and support its autonomy and academic freedom in the pursuit of new knowledge. This is the core value of a university's shared governance by faculty, administration, and governing board.

American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (2010) is an independent, voluntary organization that has been the voice for the promotion and protection of academic freedom in the U.S. "The AAUP

Committee on College and University Governance composed its first statement on academic freedom in 1920, emphasizing the importance of faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies. Refinements were introduced in subsequent years, culminating in the development of the 1966 Statement on Governance of Colleges and universities.”

It should also be pointed out that there are some limits to the capacity of shared governance that does not give faculty unqualified power and control. Colleges and universities have a tradition of giving faculty control of curriculum. However, most education decisions taken by faculty are reviewed by academic committees, academic deans, provosts, and presidents. As Henry Rosovsky (1990), a former dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Harvard University, has stated: “The university president is responsible to a board of trustees that functions rather like a board of directors. He or she has the final say on new initiatives, the hiring and firing of most personnel, and many broad questions of policy (p. 271).

Conclusion

To conclude, the reforms of Taiwan’s university governance meet global trends in governing colleges and universities but have struggled in the balance of democracy and efficiency. On the other side, the history of universities in the United States built on a culture of shared governance by faculty, administration, and governing board has produced a great deal of new knowledge resulting in significant improvement of human lives. An effective system of university governance with shared responsibility should have the main purposes of providing educational opportunities in pursuit of academic excellence in a spirit of productive cooperation. The institutional hierarchy comprising boards of trustees, the president, senior administrators, faculty, and students is firmly established within the academic system. Although modified over time to give greater voice to faculty and student concerns, college and university government still remains under the firm control of governing boards in public and private institutions alike. On many campuses, faculty senates have been established giving professors a key role in the academic power structure. But even with significant social, political, and legal changes in the academic environment, trustees and presidents continue to wield significant authority.

Hogan (2006) pointed out that there are the following four models of university governance: unicameral governance, bicameral governance, tri-cameral governance, and hybrid governance. Most colleges and universities in both Taiwan and the United States adopt the model of bicameral governance, but Taiwan's university governance system needs to learn the following structure of bicameral governance which is popular in the United States:

1. a governing board which is responsible for the administrative and financial elements of the university, and
2. an academic senate or a university council with responsibility for academic matters of an educational/academic nature (Hogan, 2006).

In order to do so, Taiwan's university governance needs more communications and a legislative change.

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Bio of Professor Lung-Sheng Lee

Dr. Lung-Sheng Lee is president (2005-) and professor of business management at National United University in Maioli, Taiwan. He also serves as president of Association for Curriculum and Instruction in Taiwan (2006-), ambassador of International Center of Taiwan, International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (1997-), and The Ohio State University Alumni Club of Taiwan (2007-). President Lee has served as dean of the College of Technology (2001-2004) and as chairperson of the Department of Industrial Technology Education (1995-2001) at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) in Taipei, Taiwan. He was a visiting researcher at Aichi University of Education in Aichi, Japan (2004-2005). He received his bachelor and master degree in industrial education from NTNU and a PhD in technology education from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, USA.



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Dr. Ming H. Land is visiting professor of business administration at Ching Yun University in Jhongli, Taoyuan, Taiwan and professor of technology emeritus at Appalachian State University (ASU) in Boone, North Carolina, USA. Professor Land has served as dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts (1989-2002) and as chairperson of the department of technology (1983-1989) at ASU. Prior to joining ASU, he served as professor of architecture in the College of Fine Arts and professor of industrial education in the College of Education and Allied Professions at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He also served on the faculty of Eastern Illinois University (1970-1971). He served as

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